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Author(s): James V. Carmichael, Jr.

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Ahistoricity and the Library Profession: Perceptions of Biographical Researchers in LIS Concerning Research Problems, Practices, and Barriers

JAMES V. CARMICHAEL, JR.

The ALA Library History Roundtable recently adopted a resolution charging schools of library and information science (LIS) to strengthen historical components in all parts of LIS curricula and to encourage historical studies among faculty and graduate students. To many individuals, such a statement may seem irrelevant and demand some explanation. In order to clarify some of these issues, a survey was sent to 102 library biographers to identify the extent of their work in biography and to garner information regarding funding, sites visited in conducting research, and problems encountered. Although financial and collegial support are frequently lacking, biographers are more concerned with problems intrinsic to their research than with external problems. Funds are apparently available if the biographer is able to write a strong proposal to the appropriate agency. Negative comments indicate that historical research is not valued highly in LIS schools and that professional history may be virtually lacking in the curriculum.

James V. Carmichael, Jr., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Originally presented at Library History Interest Group Program, ALISE Annual Conference, January 1990.

History and Library Science

For more than fifty years, librarians have experienced an image problem, and while prognoses have abounded in the literature of stereotype and status, relatively few writers have noted a relationship between ignorance of the profession's history and lack of self-esteem. Among the leaders who have emphasized the value of library history in the formation of professional identity, Pierce Butler, Louis Round Wilson, and Jesse Shera were among the most vocal, though few but advanced students in library and information science would recognize these names today.¹ Among contemporaries who share the concern for documenting and analyzing the meaning of the past's relationship to the present is a relatively obscure group of scholars, many of who are unknown to library school students due to the more pressing curricular concerns of new technology, learning theory, and what is loosely called "information science." Strangely, the pure sciences have not been loath to embrace history, and even Eugene Garfield, the herald of the information age, acknowledges the predictive value of historical methodology; citation analysis, after all, may be employed to describe the birth (and death) of disciplines.²

It is undeniably true that library history is not emphasized in the curricula of library and information science schools, and that an acquaintance with the leaders, institutions, and movements that shaped the profession has usually been sacrificed to more immediately practical concerns. Students specializing in library history pursue it in elective courses, if they are available. With several exceptions, the place of library history seems to have become archaic in library school curricula, though the ALISE annual reports do not yield enough data either to support or refute this assertion conclusively. In 1969, Shores followed up on a survey of library schools conducted by Bartlett in the mid-1960s to determine how many were actually offering library history courses, but his results were tentative. Even before the results of the survey had been fully recorded in the pages of *The Journal of Library History*³ it became evident that no respectable school would admit to the complete neglect of library history. At the same time, the claim that library history was being taught in foundations-type courses failed to elucidate the actual emphasis the subject was receiving; just because a separate course was being offered in library history (at least according to the school's catalog) did not mean that many students were enrolling in the course or that the course was being offered on more than an occasional basis. Therefore, whether or not present-day historians can claim that there has been a decline of library history in the

curricula of LIS schools in terms of credit hours, they can confirm the existence of concern for the status of history in the curriculum at least since 1966.⁴

The challenges library historians of the 1960s faced were all too obvious. Library biography in particular had an unsavory reputation, due to the tone of self-congratulation in works that usually obscured the significance of the individual's achievements in a narcotic recitation of chronological detail and failed to capture the individual's personality or the flavor of the era in which he (nearly always he) lived. Institutional histories, though informative, seemed similarly dry. There were, of course, notable exceptions in the case of both history and biography, but the instances were rare.⁵ Like other professions in which women predominated, librarians had been so invisible to outsiders that their work had been taken for granted, and it was therefore hard to generate interest from either within or without the profession.⁶ The lack of professional interest in the endeavors of library historians was exacerbated by limited publishing outlets. Moreover, library historians learned their craft by trial and error more often than not.

The loosely structured and informal group of professionals who formed the original Library History Roundtable were librarians with an interest in library history. Although some of them possessed a degree in a branch of history, most of them did not. The concerns of these professionals, as recorded in the editorial columns of *The Journal of Library History*, may now seem arcane and technical, but they bear repeating today. Prospective library historians were warned against the excessive use of footnotes in order to achieve a smoother narrative flow; the use of oral history as a bona fide technique was promoted; and occasionally, an advocate for interdisciplinary studies would step forth to exhort the invisible college of library historians. In spite of the dedication of this group, the history of librarianship, associated as it was with the pioneer years of relative professional obscurity, was gradually relegated to the sphere of diminutive specialties in many curricula in order to emphasize the computer revolution and roles for the information specialist in library science courses.

The burst of library revisionist history begun in the period preceding the American Library Association (ALA) Centennial in 1976 promised biographies, institutional histories, and bibliographic studies of a type and scope that would engage the reader, credit the profession, and flesh out the accomplishments and failures of librarians whose efforts had never been properly recognized. The activities and publications surrounding the centennial, including the celebrated Harris-Dain debate,⁷ spurred a revived

interest in the possibilities of history to stimulate critical thinking about the nature of the profession.

Unfortunately, some of the promise of that period of great debate has never been fully realized. Although the quality of publications in library history has been arguably improved, the overall number of publications has decreased. For example, in 1975 nearly a third of dissertations in library and information science employed historical analysis. By 1986, only 13 percent dealt with library history or biography, and library educators seemed to greet this decline as indicative of a healthy movement toward experimental methodology.⁸ In his study on research and education on government information topics, Richardson noted that LIS historical dissertations on government information-related topics "disappeared completely between 1969 and 1974," and though they have appeared every year since 1974 with the exception of 1978, they constitute only 12 percent of all government information theses and dissertations produced between 1928 and 1986.⁹ Osborne, however, in the 1984 *Journal of Education for Librarianship* "Research Record" report of dissertations, suggested that some researchers were choosing more quantitative methodologies for the most cynical of reasons. Bibliometrics, for instance, was proving to be very popular "perhaps because it is easy to perform, or because it is relatively efficient, or because it is relatively useful, or because it is relatively easy to defend."¹⁰ The steady rise of "quantitative" (mainly survey) research may indicate not so much that the profession has experienced a breakthrough to new knowledge as that the profession is returning to the practical, or at least marketable, emphases that dominated the profession in its early years. Choice of a topic or methodology for a dissertation may be governed by expediency as much as by intrinsic value, researcher aptitude, or interest.

Biographers of librarians have had a particularly hard time pleading the significance of their research, except during brief periods when the profession was preparing commemorative celebrations. Of course, the problems that biographers experience in gaining recognition are representative of problems encountered by individual concerned with other branches of history within the profession, though to some degree, it is harder to plead the case of a largely unknown professional than it is a public institution with which that person is associated. Some examination of the historical development of biography, however, points to generic problems not exclusively the domain of library and information science.

Biography, Library Science, and Academe

Biography has been called an art, a science, a discipline, and a

method, although as many as twenty-six different methods of biography, from auto-ethnography to case study, have been identified to encompass its various guises.¹¹ It has been seen as a branch of literature and as a branch of history, though as historian Paul Murray Kendall wryly remarked, "biography . . . if akin to history, had better wash its grubby hands before joining the company."¹² Kendall, whose biographies have been nominated for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, asserts that learned institutions generally neglect "life-writing." A brief review of biography's checkered career therefore makes it easier to understand why professions like librarianship give only occasional lip-service to their venerable worthies.

Victorian academics generally eschewed the artistic license of biography for the inclusiveness of history and tended to adopt similar methodological approaches to both. Though multivolume biographical sets abounded, they maintained stringent adherence to scientific "documentation, industriousness, fact-gathering and objectivity . . . aesthetically, there were few risk-takers."¹³ At the same time, the cult of historical fiction and sensationally popular journalistic forays into biographical form did much to discredit biography as serious research. Even the champion of interpretive biography, George Eliot, openly derided the cultish biographies of celebrities and sardonically referred to autobiography as "a string of mistakes called 'memoirs.'"¹⁴ Not until Lytton Strachey released biography from the clutches of "historians of great-man performances" in the first decades of the century was biography open to a greater variety of treatments.¹⁵ Freudian analysis gave rise to the psychobiography, and among biographers like Harold Nicholson, Andre Maurois, and Virginia Woolf, to whom biography was an "art" (or in Woolf's case, a "superior craft"), to the fear of fragmented, "scientific" personality interpretation among specialists.¹⁶ The academic New Criticism of the thirties and forties discounted biography as irrelevant to an understanding of individual artistic (and by implication, professional) achievement, though during this period biographers continued to incorporate the insights of psychology, sociology, anthropology and ethnology, often with stunning effect.

The social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s brought biography into previously uncharted domains of the common man. In an effort to correct the historical and biographical neglect of the lives of women, ethnic minorities, common laborers, and other, more anomalous groups, social historians and sociobiographers plundered archival territory considered ignoble by their Victorian predecessors. One of the outgrowths of this movement was a reexamination of the history of professions, including those "fem-

inized" professions that had been previously ignored. Naturally, biographies followed in the wake of professional history, and while librarianship proved fertile ground for the new social history and biography, too often the focus of research was narrow and parochial.

The somewhat false dichotomy between biography and history has its root in the nineteenth-century debate over the value of biography, including the proper spheres of biography and history. Carlyle, for example, who was somewhat of a purist, maintained that "biography is the only true history" but admitted to a more ambiguous view in his oft-quoted remark that "history is the essence of innumerable Biographies."¹⁷ Emerson distilled Carlyle's ideas, and in admitting that "there is properly no history; only Biography," opted for the particularist distinction.¹⁸ Biographer Leon Edel, however, best explained the symbiotic relationship between biography and history:

Writing lives is a department of history and is closely related to the discoveries of history. It can claim the same skills. No lives are led outside history or society; they take place in human time. No biography is complete unless it reveals the individual within history, within an ethos and a social complex. In saying this, remember Donne: no man is an island unto himself.¹⁹

Both history and biography suffer the same lack of prestige in library schools, though the criticisms are more often understood than voiced: reliance upon intuition and serendipity, and lack of methodological purity, significance, theory, and statistical control. No doubt these critical attitudes reflect failure to distinguish between popular histories, biographies, and autobiographies that frequently top the nonfiction best-seller charts and scholarly histories and biographies that few nonspecialists read. Added to this confusion is the contempt in which some academics hold analytico-descriptive research. Scholarly historians and biographers have contributed little to scientific methodology and frequently lack an overriding (useful) theoretical framework. Like librarians generally, they have borrowed heavily from the store of quantitative techniques developed by various branches of the social sciences.²⁰ Perhaps not coincidentally, librarians seek a base of expertise comparable to that of more prestigious professions like medicine, yet ironically they often frame their research in quasi-mathematical models that fail to account for the unique, qualitative aspects of library "science." It is worth noting in this regard that library historians actually contribute to the creation of "new" knowledge in documenting the historical record of the profession, even if their insights are frequently dimmed by unfamiliarity with related research in other fields.

The discouraging climate of academic anomie is exacerbated by the fact that biographers and historians are sometimes at odds

among themselves over their proper classification as humanists or social scientists.²¹ Ironically, in librarianship, as in other, more prestigious professions, the ascendancy of applied science, increasing financial pressures, and concerns with status and image have persuaded some professionals to forsake all traditional vestiges of "soft" science, including the history of its prescientific past, for the glamour of a "science" of "information," so the debates over the niceties of nomenclature now seem sterile. Given the background described at such length in the preceding paragraphs, the efforts of those who continue to chronicle the profession's history are likely to be branded as reactionary, if not regressive.

In spite of the fact that librarianship and library history have been assigned background roles in the deliberations and proceedings of library educators in recent years, the quality of published historical studies has been steadily improved by a more thorough grounding in cultural and social history,²² by the development of specialized indexes and bibliographies,²³ and by the activities of the Library History Roundtable, including the continuing publications of *The Journal of Library History* (now retitled *Libraries and Culture* to embrace an enlarged scope). Library historians have indeed answered Shera's challenge to produce "not more library history, but a history of librarianship"²⁴ in spite of the relatively limited channels for publishing such works and their comparative lack of prestige. Still, the activities, motivations, and attitudes of that group loosely called library historians remain obscure. It is ironic that library historians, who have repeatedly chastised the profession for the wanton destruction of personal and institutional library records, have collected so little information about themselves, since such information might strengthen arguments for library history as a fundamental component rather than as an eccentric specialty in LIS curricula. The purpose of the present survey is to fill a part of that gap and record the perceptions of a selected group of historians about their work.

The Survey

The present survey was designed to provide data about the patterns of research that characterize a select group of library historians concerned with biography. To limit the study, biographers were chosen, because a problem often mentioned by historiographers has been the difficulty of locating personal papers of librarians. As mentioned before, what can be said of biographers may apply in some measure to institutional historians because of the similarity of methodological practices.

One fine distinction between some historians and biographers

(which led to the selection of biographers as the subjects of the present study) is that biographers are more likely to encounter the obstacles of expense, the need for extensive travel, and the need for extended time to produce well-researched biographies than are institutional historians, who (at least theoretically) can more easily conduct their research from a single home base, or bibliographers, whose studies may be more discrete. The problems of biographers will, of course, be very similar to those of historians who weave biographical research into historical narrative.

In order to obtain a sample, 102 names of biographers were drawn first from contributors to the *Dictionary of American Library Biography* (DALB) and *Leaders in Academic American Librarianship, 1925–1975* (LAAL).²⁵ Further names were obtained from the third edition of *American Library History: A Bibliography of Dissertations and Theses* and *American Library History: A Comprehensive Guide to the Literature*. The names of other individuals currently engaged in biographical research were supplied in conversations with members of the ALA Library History Roundtable and the ALISE Library History Interest Group. DALB editor Wynar pointed out the difficulties in obtaining adequately written and researched biographical sketches for the DALB,²⁶ and it was decided to eliminate coauthored (i.e., rewritten) sketches from the sample, since attribution of relative effort would have been difficult to establish otherwise.

The final list comprised thirty library educators, twenty-two administrators (four in Special Collections), six retirees, three doctoral students, two nonadministrative library personnel, and four nonaffiliated personnel including a publisher and a journal editor (see table 1). These individuals were asked to supply information by title for any biographical work they had undertaken. In at least one case, a respondent indicated seven works in addition to the primary work by which he had been initially identified. A 65 percent response rate (67 responses) was received, comprising a total of 124 biographical works (see table 2). Biographical works represented in the survey ranged from DALB sketches and the more extensive LAAL essays (45 percent), to journal articles (17 percent), other publications such as memoirs and collected papers (13 percent), published and unpublished dissertations (11 percent), monographs (5 percent), works in progress (5 percent), and monographic essays (4 percent).

Respondents were asked to indicate the amount of funds received for research; whether requests for funding were denied, and if so, the agency that denied them; and their perceptions of why funds were denied. Respondents were further asked to supply a list of sites visited in conducting their research and to estimate total costs of

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Table 1. *Respondents by Type of Position Held (N = 67)*

| Type Position | Population | No. | % |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----|--------|
| Library educator | 45 | 30 | 44.80 |
| Library administrator | 31 | 18 | 26.90 |
| Retiree | 5 | 6 | 9.00 |
| Special collections adm. | 6 | 4 | 6.00 |
| Other | 7 | 4 | 6.00 |
| Student* | 2 | 3 | 4.50 |
| Nonadministrative professional | 6 | 2 | 3.00 |
| Total | 102 | 67 | 100.00 |

*Full-time doctoral students only.

Table 2. *Type of Publications of Respondents (N = 124)*

| Type Publication | No. | % |
|---------------------------|-----|--------|
| <i>DALB</i> | 47 | 37.90 |
| Article | 22 | 17.74 |
| Other | 16 | 12.90 |
| Dissertation, unpublished | 10 | 8.06 |
| <i>LAAL</i> | 8 | 6.45 |
| Book | 6 | 4.84 |
| Work in progress | 6 | 4.84 |
| Essays (monographs) | 5 | 4.03 |
| Dissertation, published | 4 | 3.23 |
| Total biographical works | 124 | 99.99* |

*Rounding error.

(each) project. Finally, respondents were asked to rank a list of barriers to biographical research, including the expense of conducting research; the unavailability of interlibrary loan in supplying rare or unique material; geographic barriers, or the necessity of travel to different sites in order to consult manuscripts, sites, or persons connected with the biographee; the attitude of interviewees, due either to bias or to reluctance or inability to supply information; lack of bibliographic control over documents related to institutions or persons with whom the biographee was associated; lack of financial support for historical projects from funding agencies; and lack of professional support from peers, administrators, deans, or tenure committees for such research. An open-ended question at the end of the survey encouraged respondents to share their general perceptions on biographical research (see appendix A).

Results

Because some respondents chose not to answer all questions or could not recall details about the amount of funds received,

expenses incurred, or sites visited, the number of responses for each set of questions varies. Moreover, in the case of the ranking of barriers to biographical research, some respondents gave Likert-scale responses on the ranking list, thus furnishing, for example, three rank 1 responses ("greatest") to different factors, or ignoring the list and supplying their own factors. Consequently, a different total number of responses were received for each factor. Frequency statistics were double-checked by tabulating the rank-order responses separately and then comparing them with results obtained when the Likert-responses were added. By either tabulation, ranking remained the same with only a slight variation in the percentages obtained.

Surveys were coded and relationships between variables tested for statistical significance at the $\alpha=.05$ level using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSx). Chi-square cross-tabulations yielded significant relationships between works in progress and professional support; between dissertations/books and geographic, financial, and professional support barriers; between articles and geographic, financial, and interlibrary loan barriers; between monographic essays and professional support; and between LAAL essays and lack of bibliographic control. No significant relationships were found to exist between job position type and barriers, cost and barriers, or job position and publication type.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) between cost and barriers yields a positive relationship between cost and geographic barriers, between cost and financial barriers, and between number of sites visited and geographic barriers. No positive relationships were detected between cost and job position, barriers other than geography and number of sites visited, or job position and number of sites visited. It was decided not to seek further statistical significant relationships by collapsing cells between groups, since doing so would merely eliminate the meaningful distinctions sought between variables. Grouped frequencies and qualitative analysis of the responses, however, yielded further useful information about general research patterns and problems among groups of respondents and publication types.

Respondents and Publication Types

At the outset, the completed surveys suggested that respondents fell into at least two groupings differentiated by degree of commitment in pursuing biographical research. Some distinction may be made between those individuals who had agreed to write a DALB essay or a similarly abbreviated biographical sketch, and those whose

primary research interests were historical or biographical. Of the forty-two individuals who wrote *DALB* sketches, thirty-six (86 percent) had attempted no further biographical work. According to information supplied by the respondents, many of the *DALB* biographers did not consult primary materials in compiling their sketches, although the editorial board of *DALB* selected prospective biographers for their geographic proximity to primary material necessary to conduct the research, their connection with a library or other institution with which the biographee had been connected, or their general likely knowledge of the subject. None of the authors of these sketches found it necessary to apply for research funds. In several instances, however, essays were based upon the author's previous doctoral research—in one case, the most extensively researched study in the present sample in terms of number of site visits. It is worth emphasizing that several prominent library historians wrote biographical sketches for the *DALB*, although the total corpus of their historical work is not reflected in the present survey. Also, several prominent library biographers (7 percent) helped to rewrite many essays, although these rewrites, some of which constituted an entirely new article, were not counted in the present sample if names appeared in a shared byline.

As expected, students engaged in doctoral research and authors of monographs display more extensive research patterns than one-time *DALB* biographers. They are the most persistent group in applying for and receiving funds for research. Twenty-seven, or 40 percent, of all respondents applied for and received some assistance in conducting their research (see table 3). Over one-fourth of these received less than \$1,000, but another fourth received amounts ranging from \$2,500 to \$4,999, and a group nearly as large received between \$5,000 and \$9,999. Two authors of monographs received \$18,500 and \$27,000 respectively, but in both cases expenses far exceeded their research grants. The total of all funds received was \$122,660, or an average of \$989 for each of the 124 projects. When limited to funding grants

Table 3. *Grouped Frequency Distribution of Funds Received for Biographical Research (N = 27)*

| Range (\$) | No. | % |
|-----------------------|-----|--------|
| Under \$1,000 | 8 | 29.63 |
| \$1,000-\$2,499 | 4 | 14.81 |
| \$2,500-\$4,999 | 7 | 25.93 |
| \$5,000-\$9,999 | 6 | 22.22 |
| Over \$10,000 | 2 | 7.41 |
| Total receiving funds | 27 | 100.00 |

Total funds received \$122,660; mean \$4,543; median \$2,700.

designed specifically to enable the completion of a particular project, the total funding figure shrinks to \$33,877.

On the other hand, 76 (61 percent) of the 124 biographical works were reported to involve expenses totalling \$176,602, an amount that exceeds funds received by 31 percent (see table 4). Average reported costs of all projects involving some expense was \$2,316. While the purpose of the question was to obtain data about grants designed exclusively to aid research, some doctoral students and faculty included fellowships, government educational grants, summer research awards, grants-in-aid, sabbatical leave, lodging, and in one instance, unpaid leave in calculating funds received. In calculating costs, doctoral students included tuition while writing their dissertations, the cost of typing, photocopying drafts of the manuscript for committee members, and in one case, the purchase of a word processor. Working librarians and library administrators, on the other hand, were extremely conscious of the economic value of their own time, and since, in several cases, assignments were completed during office hours, they were either quick to point out that the cost of their time was absorbed by the parent institution or, if they completed the assignment outside office hours, that the personal cost of their own time was considerable, but not calculated in total costs.

By any calculation, the amounts of money involved are considerable, though the average cost of conducting research according to these figures may be nearly meaningless because individual methods and motivations of researchers vary so widely and because the purposes of different publications are so dissimilar. For doctoral students and faculty attempting a major study, however, the numbers may mean a great deal; several doctoral students, for example, were cognizant of the value of ALA conferences in bringing together potential interviewees, when consulting these individuals on independent trips would have cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Students and faculty also gratefully mentioned the hospitality of family and professional colleagues when conducting research away from home, and the generosity of colleagues in sharing documentation and other information about their subject. Such aid represents thousands of dollars of savings in hotel bills, time, photocopies and long-distance telephone calls. As federal tax guidelines prohibit the deduction of expenses related to doctoral research except under very narrowly interpreted conditions,²⁷ the reported costs have a great deal of significance in terms of personal commitment of the individuals involved. Only two individuals, both working librarians, mentioned taking tax deductions, but neither was a doctoral student. In both cases, the amounts involved were "major," one involving "thousands of dollars."

Table 4. *Direct or Indirect Costs Connected with Biographical Projects*
(*N* = 76)

| Amounts | Frequency | % |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------|
| \$ 1-99 | 12 | 15.78 |
| \$ 100-249 | 13 | 17.11 |
| \$ 250-499 | 9 | 11.84 |
| \$ 500-999 | 13 | 17.11 |
| \$ 1,000-2,499 | 13 | 17.11 |
| \$ 2,500-4,999 | 7 | 9.21 |
| \$ 5,000-9,999 | 6 | 7.89 |
| \$10,000-49,999 | 2 | 2.63 |
| \$50,000 + | 1 | 1.32 |
| Total biographical works | 76 | 100.00 |

Mean cost = \$176,002 ÷ 76 = \$2,316; median cost = \$500.

Cost is not a problem exclusive to biographers and historians, of course, and even historians engaged exclusively in cliometric (i.e., statistical) analysis of demographic or economic data may incur staggering costs. A recent update of a landmark quantitative analysis of slavery, *Without Consent or Contract*, for example, is estimated to have been the "largest and most expensive nongovernmental research project ever undertaken."²⁸ Research costs continue to be a problem not only for individuals but for institutions. The problem of who should bear the costs, what projects should be funded, and how much cost should be borne by the individual has serious implications for doctoral students and faculty. Costs may be a major stumbling block for historians and biographers, although it should be noted that expectations of funding have also been raised. One major biographical dissertation completed in the 1950s was performed completely at the expense of the individual, who noted that the fashion of funding for dissertation research had not become the usual expectation, nor were federal funds available. It never even occurred to him to apply for travel grants.

Researchers may be discouraged from pursuing further biographical research once they discover the costs in terms of time and travel. One such individual complained that resources are not easy to locate and that to get returns he spent enormous amounts of time, often to no valid end. Moreover, many biographers believe that their research and writing involve more concentrated effort than other types of research, which may be accomplished in small, cumulative segments of time. For the young faculty member seeking promotion and tenure, the prerequisite productivity may not be readily apparent on a curriculum vitae. On the other hand, historical and biographical research may simply not fit into the traditional schema of inputs and outputs used to evaluate faculty members by tenure-

granting institutions. One preeminent historian whose work spans nearly three decades suggests that claims of greater expense for historical research may be somewhat exaggerated. He maintains, however, that the profession needs to adjust the scale by which historical work is evaluated since in his opinion the profession gets more return per dollar spent on historical than on any other kind of research.

Less than 10 percent of all projects receive funding. Sixty-two percent of book and dissertation projects receive funding, though those that are successfully funded represent only 13 percent of the entire sample. A third of books and dissertations represented here were denied funding, as compared to just under 10 percent for the entire sample. Relatively few casual biographers expect or seek funding, while hard-core biographers draw from a limited pool of agencies: the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), the parent university, publishers, state historical projects, and other miscellaneous sources. In one case, the editor of *LAAL* did not grant travel funds from the Council on Library Resources to the author of one sketch because the subject would not let the author use his papers, and further travel could not be justified. In nearly every other case, those who were denied funding felt their requests were refused because of perceived lack of significance. One veteran biographer, however, attributed his lack of success in securing funds to his own inexperience in writing a forceful proposal as well as to "the profession's ahistoricity." Another respondent stated simply that he believed there are funds for the serious researcher, though he did not elaborate upon the distinction between minor and major projects. The need for more formalized approaches to writing grant proposals in library schools seems obvious, however, as is the need to publicize agencies from which funds for historical research are likely to be forthcoming. Practice grant proposal writing can be incorporated into research methods courses. A specially tailored list of grant and fellowship funds, with proposal deadlines, could be published in a suitable special-interest publication such as the *ALA Library History Roundtable (LHRT) Newsletter*. The *LHRT* regularly sends a delegate to the meetings of the American Historical Association; the AHA might be persuaded to share late-breaking grants news with library schools or the *LHRT* on a systematic basis.

Faculty and library school administrators can encourage doctoral students to apply for intramural and extramural funds. Students frequently need guidance in selecting appropriate agencies and editorial assistance in writing successful proposals because many of them have no prior experience in composing research grants.

However, in the case of historical research, faculty input may be negative or obtuse. In one case, the author of a doctoral dissertation was discouraged from applying for an HEW grant because a member of the doctoral committee had heard a rumor that HEW was no longer funding historical studies. Competing within a university for research grants can be equally discouraging for doctoral students in library and information science if the significance of professional history is not appreciated. One student recounted the experience of applying for a research grant in a college that housed his subject's papers. Even though the available grant was tailored to encourage the use of extensive collections, particularly interdisciplinary research, the fact that the papers were considered "not substantial enough" mitigated against his receiving the grant. In several cases, researchers found that even Travel to Collections grants tailored to the needs of historical researchers were denied "without explanation," although at least one researcher felt that this refusal was related to the institution's lack of knowledge about librarianship as a profession.²⁹ Since its inception in 1984, the rejection rate of NEH Travel to Collections grants increased dramatically. Originally designed to provide grants of \$500 (the amount was raised to \$750 in July 1986) to facilitate the travel of scholars to collections important to their research, the number of projects funded shrank from 515 in 1984 to 305 in 1987.³⁰ In 1989, 64 percent of applications were rejected, though the pool of applicants had shrunk to 842. Out of 1,277 applications received in fiscal year 1990, 416 were funded, with a rejection rate of 68 percent. To be fair, it should be emphasized that the grants are open to all humanities researchers, not just historians, whose work requires travel to use specific collections.³¹

Doctoral students may also believe that the profession does not reward their labors equitably even if they successfully complete their research after having passed over the hurdles of time, money, and complexity. One researcher in the present study who had not applied for research grants did submit his resulting dissertation for the ALISE dissertation award and felt that the fact that it was biographical/historical was one reason it did not win. Ruefully, he added, "the only numbers in it are the page numbers." Problems of a different type are encountered by nonacademics. One researcher took a leave of absence from his job and was denied an NEH Bicentennial Fellowship because as an independent scholar, he had a harder time proving the legitimacy of his project.

Naturally, the costs for those preparing dissertations and books are greater than those of the casual biographer, though probably few doctoral students or potential authors are prepared for the magnitude of the differences. In the present survey, those who have

published book-length biographies or dissertations or report current work in progress (three dissertations, one monograph) have average expenses eight times greater than authors of articles, thirteen times greater than authors of monographic essays or miscellaneous pieces, and twenty times greater than those of the authors of *DALB* or *LAAL* sketches (see table 5). Comparing median costs, those of doctoral students and book authors are twenty-four times greater than those of the authors of biographical sketches, ten times greater than those incurred by authors of monographic essays, and more than six times greater than that of the authors of articles. Of course, these categories are not entirely discreet since it is the type of publication being considered here rather than the total costs and output of an individual author. The author of one book estimates that costs exceeded \$50,000; yet costs to produce the biographical sketch based on this dissertation were minimal. The point to be made here, of which novices to biographical research may be unaware, is that extensive biographical research based on primary sources often entails great blocks of time, extensive travel, massive amounts of photocopying, frequent long-distance telephone calls, and other expenses such as the costs of reproducing photographs, transcribing tapes, and duplicating microfilm. More discrete methodologies such as citation analysis or other types of bibliometric studies, simulation experiments, or even surveys may entail considerable expenses associated with computer time, but probably not in the magnitude experienced by library biographers.

A critic might observe that greater expenses reflect inefficiencies rather than actual costs. The present survey seemed to indicate, however, that they are directly related to the necessity of traveling to locate and examine manuscript collections or to interview family, descendants, and colleagues of the biographee. The number of sites visited by book and dissertation authors far exceeded that of any other group. It is expected that biographers will examine primary (manuscript) sources, be fairly exhaustive in their searches, and reexamine primary source material used by previous researchers in case some link of evidence has been missed. Moreover, it is difficult to write convincing biographical narrative without the actual words of the biographee. Although some archives such as that of the American Library Association at Champaign-Urbana are willing to photocopy and mail what is needed for the researcher, many special collections departments are loathe to expose any fragile documents to the harmful levels of light and heat exposure in a copier. The physical handling involved in copying a document may also cause damage. The researcher may also need to be at the archives to examine the physical documents *in situ*, in case the arrangement of

Table 5. *Characteristics of Research by Publication Type*

| Characteristic by Group Total (No. Resp.) | <i>DALB/ LAAL</i> | Book/Diss./ "In Progress" | Article | Essay/ "Other" | Total |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| N | 55 | 26 | 22 | 18 | 124 |
| Amt. of funding received (Responses) | \$3,700 (4) | \$93,207 (16) | \$22,933 (5) | \$2,820 (2) | \$122,660 (27) |
| Applications for funding denied (Agency) | 1 (Editor) | 8 (NEH, HEW, state, univ.) | 1 (NEH) | 2 (HEW) | 12 |
| Cost | | | | | |
| Median | \$200 | \$4,000† | \$500 | \$300 | \$165,327 |
| Mean | \$281 | \$6,845 | \$1,072 | \$674 | (70) |
| (Responses) | (30) | (21) | (16) | (8) | |
| Site visits | | | | | |
| Total | 48 | 224 | 32 | 14 | 318 |
| Median | 1 | 6.5 | 2 | 1 | |
| Mean | 1.66 | 9.74 | 2.33 | 6 | |
| (Responses) | (29) | (23) | (14) | (9) | (75) |
| State visits | | | | | |
| Total | 25 | 112 | 11 | 10 | 206 |
| Median | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | |
| Mean | 1.47 | 4.87 | 1.57 | 4 | |
| (Responses) | (17) | (23) | (7) | (7) | (54) |
| Regional visits* | | | | | |
| Total | 16 | 38 | 6 | 2 | 62 |
| Median | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| Mean | 1.15 | 1.9 | 1 | 4 | |
| (Responses) | (13) | (20) | (6) | (4) | (43) |

*Number of site visits, state visits, and region visits do not include home base, state, or region. Those not venturing outside of home base, state, or region are not counted.

†The expenses of this group range from a low of \$500 of reported costs to high values of \$15,000, \$22,000, and \$50,000. The mode lies between the mean and median at \$5,000, the costs estimated by three respondents.

a collection of papers carries some clue to the workings of the mind of their creator or in case evidence suggests a search in another collection housed in the same institution.

The average number of site visits outside the home base of the biographer was more than three times as great for dissertation and book authors as the number for authors of journal articles, and more than six times as great as that of any other publication type. The distance traveled by this group was roughly approximated by calculating the number of states and census regions outside the biographer's home state or region that were visited. Eighty-eight percent of dissertation and book authors traveled outside of their home state, and 76 percent visited at least one region outside their

own. All groups of biographers, however, reported some travel outside the home state and region. The smallest proportion of site, state, and region visits occurred in the *DALB/LAAL* group, and even among these writers, 52 percent made at least one site visit, 31 percent made outside state visits, and 24 percent made outside region visits.

Barriers to Biographical Research

Geographic. Interestingly, it is the physical barriers created by the geographic scatter of manuscripts and relevant persons that creates the greatest barrier for practitioners of biographical research (see table 6). Twenty-one percent of all respondents (N=79) ranked geographic barriers as the greatest impediment to research, although several were quick to point out that travel was related to the expense of conducting research, which was the next barrier to research most frequently cited as the greatest. When the number of respondents ranking the factors first or second most important are added together, geographic barriers still hold first place; 22 percent of first- and second-place rankings fall within this group. Lack of bibliographic control and lack of financial support share second place when the first- and second-place barriers are added together (17 percent), followed by the expense of conducting research (12 percent). Other barriers were the unavailability of interlibrary loan (9 percent), lack of time (8 percent), lack of professional support (7 percent), "other" factors (5 percent) and interviewee attitude (2 percent). While no claim is made for the significance of these numbers, they suggest at least a framework within which comments of the biographers can be reported.

One doctoral student reflected the concerns of several members of the Library History Roundtable about the low survival rate of official library records. Another writer ranked lacunae in his subject's personal papers as the greatest problem in conducting research and went on to explain that personal papers usually do not exist at all and the biographers must rely solely on the publications of the biographees and background publications (e.g., annual reports) of the institutions or organizations they served. When these in-house publications have been treated casually or discarded, the biographer must begin a lengthy process of identifying likely institutions that might have collected and saved such records. One respondent did not hesitate to blame such negligence on the lack of records retention programs by "institutions which ought to know better." Another writer was even more severe in his condemnation of the archival practices of libraries and library schools, but lay the

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Table 6. *Priority Ranking of Barriers to Biographical Research**

| Priority Ranking [1 = Greatest Barrier] | 1 N = 79 (%) | 2 N = 52 (%) | 3 N = 44 (%) | 4 N = 31 (%) | 5 N = 44 (%) |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Geographic barriers | 17 (21.52) | 12 (23.10) | 7 (15.91) | 4 (12.90) | 3 (6.82) |
| Expense of conducting research | 10 (12.66) | 6 (11.50) | 10 (22.73) | 5 (16.13) | 4 (9.09) |
| Unavailability of ILL | 6 (7.59) | 6 (11.59) | 7 (15.91) | 8 (25.81) | 5 (11.36) |
| Lack of professional support from peers, administrators, deans, etc. | 8 (10.13) | 1 (1.90) | 6 (13.64) | 3 (9.68) | 14 (31.82) |
| Interviewee attitude | 2 (2.53) | 1 (1.90) | 2 (4.54) | 4 (12.90) | 8 (18.80) |
| Lack of bibliographic control | 11 (13.92) | 11 (21.20) | 4 (9.09) | 4 (12.90) | 7 (15.90) |
| Lack of financial support (grants, fellowships, etc.) | 11 (13.92) | 11 (21.20) | 7 (15.91) | 3 (9.68) | 3 (6.82) |
| Lack of time | 8 (10.13) | 3 (5.80) | 1 (2.27) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| Other | 6 (7.59) | 1 (1.90) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| Total N (%) | 79 (99.99)† | 52 (100.00) | 44 (100.00) | 31 (100.00) | 44 (100.00) |

*Number of responses vary for each ranking due to Likert-scale responses given by some respondents. These responses have been added exactly as given (above) to the ranked responses given by the remainder of the sample. Results by rank alone were compared with those obtained by adding the Likert responses: ranks remained the same, with only slight variation in percentages.

†Rounding error.

blame on the profession's lack of interest in promoting its own history.

Even archives that routinely report manuscript collections of more than 500 pieces to the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections often fail to include their own institutional records, and frequently library records are scattered throughout other general administrative papers. Although the ALA Archives' finding aids approach the kind of bibliographic tool needed by historians and biographers, even the best inventory often provides only the sketchiest of outlines, and long-distance conversations with repository personnel can be fruitless, although fortunately, this situation is not always the case.^{32,33} Even so, more often than not, travel is still necessary.

In one case, only one institution consulted by the researcher permitted him to borrow runs of library annual reports, a fact that suggests that, even if pertinent material can be located through bibliographies, union lists, or online catalogs, it is frequently not available for borrowing if it is considered unique or rare. Then again, even when material can be borrowed or photocopies of primary or secondary material are available for purchase, the interlibrary loan and copying procedures can often take weeks. The writer loses momentum, if not the very reason for borrowing or

purchasing the material in the first place. In elaborating upon the barriers to biographical research, not least of those listed was lack of access to special collections at night and on weekends, another form of professional nonsupport that is ubiquitous.

Related to concerns about access were "other" factors supplied by respondents. Among items listed were (1) the failure of librarians to preserve their own correspondence and files, (2) the "poverty of material on subjects who are not very well-known," (3) the lack of good newspaper indexes for the nineteenth century (although "this situation has improved somewhat in recent years"), and (4) the lack of documentation in the field of children's services ("because the work was not considered important enough"). What is remarkable in the number of high rankings received by bibliographic control is that biographical researchers seemed discouraged not so much by the lack of resources, professional support, or time as they were by the apparent apathy of the profession about its own history and the loss of the raw materials of biography.

Even more germane to the concern of bibliographic control is the problem of locating likely interviewees. Although fewer respondents ranked interviewee bias or recalcitrance as a barrier to research, many discussed the problem in open-ended comments. Library educators seemed particularly aware of the importance of oral history to biography. Interviews with living persons brought "a facet to the biography which no amount of secondary sources [could] provide the amateur biographer," particularly as they reflected on the "personality, character, and *modus operandi* of the biographee." The subject of effective and unbiased interviewing is stressed in the social sciences, but research methods courses in LIS curricula may provide little opportunity for practical experience in techniques of interviewing. One writer who commented on interviews pointed out that interviewees were often only too pleased to discuss the achievements of the biographee, yet this comment suggests the pitfalls of trusting too completely the opinions of those whose memories may have softened with time or who may fear to discuss all aspects of a subject's personality candidly. As one historian cautioned, it is crucial for the credibility of library biography that all aspects of the subject's personality be treated even-handedly; even the most candid interviews require verification with other data sources.

Timing can be crucial in the case of a recently deceased subject, because if the writer dawdles over the planning stage of a biographical project or has to wait too long for funding, potential interviewees who are contemporaries of the biographer may die before their memories can be taped. Some biographers, however, caution against

the barrier created when a subject is (to quote one respondent) "not dead enough." Interviews on a living subject often present insurmountable barriers because of the emotion surrounding the subject, issues, or ideologies.

Expense. The next barrier ranked highest by respondents, expense, is undoubtedly closely related to geographic barriers and lack of bibliographic control, since travel is expensive, and lack of bibliographic control often predicates travel and loss of valuable time. It should be noted that some respondents failed to distinguish between lack of financial support and the expense of conducting research due to the inadequate explanation of terms on the survey. One respondent, who had evidently thought about the problems of biographical research for many years, pointed out that all of the factors listed were closely related concerns. For example, lack of professional support often translates into lack of financial support.

Lack of Professional Support. Lack of professional support is related to the perception among peers and administrators that biographical research is "not significant enough." In nearly every case where lack of professional support was rated either first or second in importance, the corollary factor of significance was raised. One author who had written a biographical sketch for a journal commented on the "lack of outstanding people about whom to write." More experienced biographers, on the other hand, recognized the importance of narrative skill in conveying the importance of their subject. Losing the grand sweep of historical events surrounding the subject and failing to distinguish between trivial and crucial information are common pitfalls, yet even if these obstacles are overcome, the biographer must compose convincing prose.

If historical/biographical research is thought by tenure committees, funding agencies, deans, or university officials to lack significance a priori, it will become increasingly difficult to make a case for significance, since in-depth studies frequently require the cooperation of funding agencies, university officials, and library school personnel. Increasingly, faculties require proof of publication in refereed journals and a demonstrated focus of research in making tenure decisions, but the number of refereed journals that publish historical articles is minimal, and other than *Libraries and Culture*, those that publish them do so only on an occasional basis. One author, for example, felt frustrated that there was no assurance of publication before all the effort of identifying and documenting the accomplishments of relatively unknown figures, and another listed lack of regular publishing outlets for historical material as a demoralizing factor. Authors determined to make their mark in library history can do so in competing for the Justin Winsor Prize

offered every year by the Library History Roundtable for the best historical essay, but the Winsor prize is a unique example. Since it is true that historical works occasionally win professional book awards, the frustration that library biographers feel may be related to the lack of a comfortable middle ground of peer recognition, rather than the lack of a pinnacle to which they can aspire.

From the results of the survey, it is obvious that history generally, and biography in particular, is frequently expensive, time-consuming, and undervalued. Moreover, the perceptions of biographical researchers bear out the assumption that it is seen as easy research by the profession generally and that it is viewed as synonymous with historical research. One distinguished author, however, gives lie to the latter claim: "Unfortunately, people assume that if you can write history, you can also write biography. It ain't so."

Even if biographical research comes easily to the researcher, more basic problems of perspective lie in wait: an objective attitude towards the "warts on the portrait" of the biographee is hard-won, and the temptation to celebrate the accomplishments of the protagonist exerts a perpetual siren's call.

Discussion

Particularly in a subfield of historical study such as biography, in which success may depend upon serendipitous factors, library biographers believe that faculty members and administrators attuned to the parlance of tenure are not likely to value intelligent luck and endurance very highly. Ironically, science itself depends upon serendipity; absurdly lucky discoveries by one researcher often follow years of painstaking laboratory research by others.³⁴ Still, even if one discounts the perceptions of hardship recounted by some respondents as exaggerated, it is nonetheless true that the efforts of library historians and biographers are not likely to be seen in the same light as those of the purveyors of artificial intelligence.

To be fair, it should be reiterated that the biographers represented by the present survey display a great range of attitudes towards their research along with varying levels of expertise. Many of the contributors to the *DALB*, for example, had never before written a biographical or historical essay. They frequently mentioned working on their piece during office hours, using staff and supplies of the library in the preparation of their sketches. Several contributors emphasized that they were not normally involved in research or historical writing or that their articles were either one-time assignments from their director or considered part of their regular work. Other *DALB* contributors felt unqualified to respond to sections of

the survey because of their unfamiliarity with practices and principles of biographical research.

Even specialists in library history emphasized their own lack of training in library history and historical methodology. In listing barriers to biographical research, one mentioned "limited experience," while another pointed to the "lack of preparation in my own strong professional education—learned very little history in M.L.S. program, despite Foundations course. Dissertation took on a very 'seat of the pants' approach, despite doctoral methods class and my own previous secondary source research in project."

An extensive grounding in historical theory and methods may not be warranted in every case, of course, nor is use of primary materials necessarily a criterion of quality, especially for shorter pieces, where they are often not needed. For example, a friend forwarded pertinent secondary sources to one *DALB* contributor who had, incidentally, also been a personal acquaintance of the biographee. In many more cases, however, primary resources simply cannot be located. One *DALB* contributor explained that he consulted secondary sources exclusively because he could not locate a personal collection. The perception that examination of manuscript sources should be reserved for only the most extensive treatments of biographical subjects is disturbing in its implications and leads one to speculate that even shorter pieces could be more thoroughly researched if resources were easily identifiable or readily available.

Doctoral students, hard-core biographers, and others on whose publication record tenure is determined are much more aware of the limitations of their studies though they are more likely to attach importance to biographical research *per se*. They are also more likely to have multiple biographical publications in a variety of formats, to have applied for and received funding, and to feel constrained by expense and time due to a heightened awareness of the existence of primary sources. They sense more keenly the necessity for greater blocks of time for amassing, collating, and fashioning biographical information into a smooth narrative flow. Because historical research is so time-consuming, the publication records of historians often pale in comparison to writers in other fields, at least in terms of raw numbers. As one writer remarked, "Cognoscenti recognize the qualitative difference, but colleagues and administrators seldom do."

With regard to professional support, the hard-core group is more aware of the problem of biography being seen as "soft" research by colleagues. Award-winning biographies and histories in librarianship are all too few and far between, and the rewards accruing to library biographers are more often intrinsic and idealistic than

prestigious or monetary. While some writers feel adequately compensated by the nature of their work and by the comradeship with other researchers who are carrying on similar research at the same time, others are cynical about the purposes and practice of the craft; one writer claims that librarians are more interested in biography than in historical studies because "the top dogs see themselves as subjects for future study."

Whether or not all library biographers feel equally moved by their task, all are aware of the problems: lack of time, lack of funds, and lack of peer support as incentives to quality work. More than one biographer *manque* noted that the demands of historical research for blocks of uninterrupted writing time were in direct conflict with the current ethos of research at academic institutions. Particularly for untenured faculty members, piecing together a coherent narrative from brief thirty-minute writing blocks, as has been suggested,³⁵ may simply not permit the kind of painstaking collation and creative writing that biography requires. Research that is fast, "do-able," and marketable in widely read scholarly journals appeals to search committees looking for a potentially successful candidate and to tenure committees examining the impact of an individual's contributions to scholarly literature. Biographers and historians can meet these expectations only by either sacrificing their primary research interests for more toney methodologies or by lowering the quality of their historical work. If they stick to history or biography, they will probably also need to publish in peripheral publications outside their field.

Less ubiquitous but more debilitating than the general lack of professional support are the related effects of dissuasion employed by deans, promotion and tenure committees, and peer groups. The two most important incentives for doing biographical (or any kind of) research, notes one library educator, are individual motivation and promotion/tenure. However, a writer without an impressive record of historical research and publication is not likely to find support for historical projects in all quarters. One doctoral student pointed out that even when a library school has a tradition of supporting library history and the dean has published significant works in the field, biographical research is often discouraged. When she submitted her proposal for a biography of a female library leader, her committee was indifferent because of the historical subject matter. Moreover, since the projected biographee was female, she was subjected to "anti-feminist concerns—would a bio of a woman really be a good career move for me?" The attitude of the dean of a library school can be crucial, as indicated by one library educator who ranked professional support as the second-greatest problem under the present dean, an information scientist, and the least of barriers under the former dean,

a library historian. Cost accountability in terms of time and the number of publications produced also exerts considerable pressure among library educators and discourages extensive historical research. Still, most biographers persist in their effort even though the risks are great. In spite of "high estimated expenses" for relatively meager results, at least one respondent denied that her research agenda had been modified by peer expectations. Another swears, "Never again!" Those who do forsake history and/or biography claim to do so for both the most practical and flippant of reasons: "[Now] I spend more of my time writing about the future which is much easier, because people have a harder time criticizing you for not having your facts straight." Protestations aside, however, even one-time library biographers seem committed to their subjects and to the risks that attend low-status research.

Perhaps the greatest problem of all, as revealed in the open-ended comments, is the lack of disciplinary focus that would encourage exposure to historical theory and methodology and foster practical experience in the examination of historical evidence. It simply cannot be assumed that library school students who know how to thoroughly research a reference question will also be qualified to piece together primary and secondary evidence into a cogent and cohesive biography or history. Financial and professional support for historical research is scant enough, though as the survey shows, more opportunities for funding exist than might be commonly assumed. Acquaintance with history as a subject as worthy of study as "information transfer," however, certainly seems to be lacking. Students in nearly every field of the humanities receive extensive exposure to the histories of their disciplines, and if they fail to learn the names of their venerable worthies or are unable to discuss in considerable depth the historical developments that characterized the growth of their discipline, they very likely will not receive their master's degrees. This situation is not true of library and information science, presumably because the term *science* precludes historical perspectives; yet even "pure" scientists must know the works of their fields if for no other reason than because their knowledge base is cumulative. In less marginal professions, history and biography are central rather than peripheral elements of basic professional knowledge and at some campuses may be a hallmark of prestige.³⁶ Not only do schools of library and information science seem increasingly nonchalant about the transmission of their professional heritage, but in several cases herein cited they seem to welcome the erasure of their professional past. The point may be well taken that until a sufficient corpus of substantial historical and biographical works are written, or until they become a more important part of the curricular

canon, library and information scientists will have no evidence that they have a professional past (or professional knowledge) worth preserving. In a field that for centuries has served as a mirror of the host society, neglect of the rich historical context that emphasizes its import seems tragic, if not suicidal. The contribution American librarianship has made to the world of information is significant, even if the impact of individuals is unmeasurable by methods of statistical inference.

Until equal weight is given to historical research as is accorded more fashionable modes of discovery, librarians will probably continue to display their thin skins in the pages of the national press whenever librarians are described through the dimly perceived veil of antiquated stereotypes, library educators will continue to be locked in a stranglehold of mutual distrust and methodological snobbery, and the next generation of librarians will meet the twenty-first century profoundly poorer in the knowledge of their professional heritage. Though history alone will not solve all of the problems facing the library and information science profession, agreement on the fact that the profession has made lasting contributions in the past may strengthen the resolve to approach the future with more than a whimper.

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22. Notable examples are Young, A. P.: *American Library History: A Bibliography of Dissertations and Theses*. 3d ed. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1988; Davis, D. G., Jr., and Tucker, J. M.: *American Library History: A Comprehensive Guide to the Literature* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 1989).

23. Shera, J. H.: "Without Reserve: What the Historian Has Been Missing," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 40:639 (Mar. 1966).

24. Wynar, B. S., ed.: *Dictionary of American Library Biography* (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1978); Wiegand, W. A., ed.: *Leaders in American Academic Librarianship, 1925-1975* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: Beta Phi Mu (dist. by American Library Association), 1983).

25. *Ibid.*, p.xxxiii-xxxvii.

26. P-H 1990 Fed. Tax Serv. par. 1622.04.

27. Johnson, M. P.: "Upward in Slavery," *The New York Review of Books* 36: 52 (Dec. 21, 1989).

28. Travel to Collections grants rate of rejection in this study: four out of six, or 67 percent. To be fair, it should be noted that the NEH has a high rate of rejection; hence, "without explanation," else the NEH would spend much of their time "explaining."

29. National Endowment for the Humanities: *Annual Report*, 1984, p.91; *Annual Report*, 1987, p.178.

30. Telephone interview with Kathleen Mitchell, program officer, National Endowment for the Humanities, 3 June 1990.

31. Britchford, M., and Gilliland, A.: *Guide to the American Library Association Archives*, 2d ed. (Chicago: American Library Assn., 1987).

32. The political dimensions of access to manuscripts collections affect their use profoundly. See, for example, Duberman, M. B.: "'Writhing Bedfellows' in Antebellum South Carolina: Historical Interpretation and the Politics of Evidence," in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. M. Duberman, M. Vicinus, and G. Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), p.153-68; and Porter, B.: "Touch of Genius," *Connoisseur*, 220:80-86, 126-27 (June 1990), which discusses the New York Public Library's Berg collection and the Victorian attitudes of curator John Gordan concerning controversial correspondence.

33. Consider, for example, Fleming's accidental discovery of penicillin: McFarlane, G.: *Alexander Fleming: The Man and the Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1984), p.117-26.

34. Boice, R., Scepanski, J. M., and Wilson, W.: "Librarians and Faculty Members: Coping with Pressures to Publish," *College & Research Libraries* 48:484-503 (Nov. 1987).

35. The Biographical Research Center at The University of Hawaii, for example, publishes *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*. The University of Indiana at Bloomington recruits specialists in history in every school.

Appendix A. Survey—Biographical Research in Library History

1. Name of biographical work:

2. Sources and amounts of external funding for this research (grants, fellowships, scholarships, etc.):

3. Did you apply for any financial awards which you did not obtain? If so, what did you perceive were the reasons you did not receive funding?

4. What sites/manuscript repositories was it necessary for you to visit to conduct your research? (Please also include interviews for which it was necessary for you to travel from your home base).

5. If possible, estimate the total cost of your research. If not known, estimate amounts associated with photocopying, travel, etc.

6. In your opinion, what are the greatest external barriers to biographical research? (Please rank any that apply: 1 = greatest . . . 5 = least, etc.)

Expense _____
Geographic access to materials, people _____
Gaining confidence of interviewees _____
Lack of bibliographic control _____
Lack of financial support _____
Lack of professional support _____
Other _____

7. Other comments on your experience with biographical research: